



Consortium on Elections and Political Processes (CEPPS)

Sector:	Democracy and Governance
SO3	Rehabilitate Afghanistan as a Nation State
Implementers:	International Foundation for Election Systems (IFES); National Democratic Institute (NDI); International Republican Institute (IRI)
Duration:	March 1, 2003 – August 30, 2005

The primary goal of the program is to assist Afghanistan with the creation of permanent election institutions which will enable the Government to implement elections with their own resources and expertise. CEPPS partners provide financial and material support to the elections process and political parties in Afghanistan through political party and candidate trainings, election coordination and observation, media support, voter/civic education and operations/logistics.

Background:

The multilateral, UN-led effort to hold elections in Afghanistan has focused primarily on the mechanics of establishing the legal, institutional and logistical framework for voter registration, polling and counting. USAID partners and the Democracy and Governance Kabul office provided critical assistance to this process. CEPPS provided assistance to both the Emergency and Constitutional Loya Jirgas in the lead-up to the October 2004 Presidential elections. These events established the Afghan Interim Government and Electoral Commission which led to the successful presidential elections in October 2004.

As important, yet more daunting, is the task of aiding Afghanistan in the long-term process of developing a professional political class, and instilling a sense of democratic values in society. To this extent, USAID D/G and its partners NDI and IRI are providing political parties and candidates with the necessary tools with which a more democratic political environment can be created.

Partner Activities:

International Foundation for Election Systems (IFES)

Civic education – IFES provides nation-wide civic/voter education, which reached an estimated 4.2 million adults in Afghanistan for the 2004 Presidential election. IFES staff provides voter/civic education in the central Kabul region, while their grantee Swisspeace/Afghan Civil Society Forum (ACSF) covers the remaining 28 provinces. This will most likely be replicated for the 2005 Parliamentary, Provincial and District elections.

Technical Support – IFES provides technical support to the domestic Election Commission and is prepared to continue their technical support for the Media Commission as they did in 2004. Their expertise strengthened the 2004 Interim Afghan Electoral Commission's ability to administer elections and their current work will assist with the functioning of the permanent election body.

National Democratic Institute (NDI)

Political Party Strengthening - NDI has been working to strengthen and reform Afghan political parties, with a particular emphasis on burgeoning democratic parties. NDI provides training on such topics as campaigning, principles of democracy, fundraising and policy creation and implementation for parties and candidates throughout the country. The role of women in parties is currently being developed and will be further integrated into the program in 2005. USAID is also pursuing plans to enhance the overall political party strengthening program to include an element of coalition-building.

Domestic Election Monitoring - NDI assisted with the establishment of a network of domestic election observers and has trained upwards of 10,000 political party and candidate poll agents.

International Republican Institute (IRI)

Local-level (Shura) Community Development – IRI brought various district or “shura” level groups in the southern region together to discuss common interests and ways in which they could cooperate. IRI will continue this activity in 2005 and will focus more upon trainings which compliment NDI's work with political parties.